

public to accept the tax program along with the measure for the improvement of our educational system.

For some reason, not easy to explain, the basic question of a new program of public education became lost in the murk of a controversy over the financial aspects of the plan. In the turmoil over the tax, a bewildered public all but forgot what they were being called upon to pay for. I have said before, and I repeat here, that never before in my long experience have I seen a piece of legislation so widely misunderstood and so badly misrepresented as has been this tax legislation. It is hard for me to believe that some of the misrepresentation was not deliberate. Repeatedly, during the legislative session and since, I tried to explain, to the best of my ability, that if the revenue picture improved to a point that additional taxes are no needed to finance the education program and other services, I will be the first to propose a reduction or repeal of the additional tax, which as you know does not take effect until next January 1. It was as my suggestion that the original tax bill was amended to grant the Board of Public Works authority to grant tax credits to the individual taxpayers in the event the revenues were not needed.

In effect, that amendment granted the Board authority to reduce the tax. And, when a court ruled that provision unconstitutional, I announced publicly that I will call a special session of the Legislature to reduce or repeal the tax if a revised statement of revenues by the Board of Revenue Estimates indicates the revenues are not needed to keep the budget in balance. I don't know how I could have stated a position more clearly than I have stated that. And yet, for some unexplainable reason, a doubt seems to remain in the minds of some of the people that such action will be taken.

Let me say that the revenue picture looks bright at this time. Maryland, with the rest of the nation, is enjoying a period of unprecedented prosperity. It is, the economists say, the longest period of continuing rise in economy that our country has ever experienced. Under these circumstances, I can say that it is altogether likely that the next statement of revenues, which I expect within a few weeks, will show that the additional tax can be reduced or repealed. No Marylander will be more pleased than I if that is the case, and none will be more insistent upon prompt action than I will be.

We have an excellent program of public education in Maryland, and we will support it regardless of the financial implications. An illustrious American journalist, Walter Lippman, has written:

"We must measure our educational effort as we do our military